

Inspection of a good school: St Andrew's CE Primary School and Nursery

Tower Hill, Much Hadham, Hertfordshire SG10 6DL

Inspection dates:

18 and 19 July 2023

Outcome

St Andrew's CE Primary School and Nursery continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their school. It is a safe, happy place where they play an active role in helping to make their school even better. The school environment is inclusive and friendly. Pupils from all communities feel welcome here.

Pupils have a well-developed and age-appropriate understanding of difference. They develop an appreciation of different cultures, religions and beliefs. Pupils have respect for one another and develop kindness through their 'buddy' system. As a result, bullying is very rare. Pupils are confident that staff will always tackle it, if it happens.

There is a sense of purpose in lessons. Adults have extremely high expectations of all pupils. Pupils focus well, and disruption is minimal. Pupils tackle their work in class with great excitement and belief that they will succeed.

Pupils are responsible citizens of the St Andrew's community. They make decisions about improving the school and local community through their impactful and joyful 'cabinets', led by pupils of all ages in the pupil parliament. Pupils have developed confidence and resilience through these leadership positions, taking part in developing a school production and leading assembly.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have carefully designed the curriculum, identifying the important ideas and concepts pupils should know. They have set out what pupils will learn and when they will learn it. This means that new learning builds on what pupils already know.

Teachers are skilled at providing pupils with the chance to practise and apply their knowledge. This helps pupils remember much of the curriculum. Pupils learn ambitious vocabulary and important concepts as they move through the school. As a result, pupils achieve well over time.

Leaders are in the process of building on their already strong curriculum to ensure that pupils excel. For example, in history, pupils learn through 'threads', such as learning about different inventions every school year. By revisiting and exploring this topic in more depth, they gain a deep understanding of the historical concepts involved. Leaders are now beginning to establish a similar approach to other subjects.

Pupils from Nursery to Year 6 highly value the education they receive. They take delight in sharing their learning with others across the school and local community. Staff and pupils have a shared belief in a calm environment for learning. Therefore, low-level disruption is extremely infrequent. Breaktimes are a source of joy for pupils. There is a sense of calm and order as pupils play with purpose. Older and younger pupils alike are kind and thoughtful as they happily engage with each other.

The school's chosen phonics programme sets out precisely what pupils need to know and learn, and by when. Adults have strong subject knowledge. This means they teach pupils to read well. When pupils do not keep up with the phonics programme, staff provide them with effective support to help them to catch up. As a result, all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), develop their reading ability over time.

Leaders have trained staff to swiftly identify the needs of pupils with SEND. Consequently, adults provide support to these pupils in a timely fashion. Staff are clear on their role in ensuring that all pupils flourish, regardless of their needs. Pupils with SEND learn the curriculum well.

Children in the early years get off to a good start. They settle quickly into the purposeful environment, learning routines and making friends. Adults skilfully develop children's communication skills through meaningful conversation. The early years curriculum clearly identifies important knowledge to be learned. Adults explain new concepts well, helping children to develop their understanding. This means that the vast majority of children have a smooth transition to Year 1.

The extensive planned curriculum for pupils' wider development teaches children about the school's values, such as 'friendship' and 'responsibility'. Pupils understand and live the vision, telling visitors to 'come and see'. For example, young leaders were keen to explain how they made improvements to the local park.

Some parents and pupils have asked for more clubs and trips. However, leaders have done much to develop enrichment within the school day. The rich, planned programme is comprehensive and progressive. At St Andrew's, pupils have a deep understanding of important, local issues and celebrate the differences of others.

Governors are well informed about the school. They have a clear and accurate understanding of strengths and areas for development. They take regular opportunities to visit the school to see for themselves what leaders tell them. Staff feel extremely well supported by leaders at all levels.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that keeping pupils safe is prioritised by all staff. Staff know how to identify pupils at risk of harm. This is because they receive regular and relevant training. Leaders regularly undertake checks of records to ensure nothing is missed.

Leaders are swift to secure help for pupils and families. This includes working with external agencies if needed. All pre-employment checks are carried out and recorded following the relevant statutory guidance.

Pupils have learned how to stay safe. They use worry boxes and can identify many adults they can talk to if they have a worry. Pupils learn about a range of risks, including when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, leaders are still in the process of bringing about changes. While pupils learn well, they do not develop the deep body of knowledge that they do in some subjects, such as reading and history. Leaders should continue their work to implement their ambitious curriculum plans, so that pupils can achieve highly across all subjects.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2014.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	117444
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10288463
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	218
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Lindsay Steel
Headteacher	Caroline Dimond
Website	www.standrews236.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a Church of England School in the Diocese of St Albans. The school's last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, was in May 2023. Its next section 48 inspection will be within eight school years.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator. He met with other leaders and staff.
- The inspector met the chair of the governing body and other governors. He also spoke with representatives of the diocese and the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, visited a sample of

lessons, spoke to teachers, talked to some pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector also looked at curriculum information in other subjects and observed some pupils reading to their teachers or teaching assistants.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, at break and at lunchtimes. The inspector met with pupils, both formally and informally. The views of pupils were also considered through the Ofsted pupil survey.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation, including safeguarding records, and reviewed the systems for keeping pupils safe.
- The inspector considered the views of parents through the responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey, and through conversations with parents at the start of the school day.
- The views of staff were considered from meetings held with staff and from the responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Conor Heaven, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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